Three Professors Dismissed

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Students Question Hood Firings

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Hood College students and administrators held a heated discussion last night over the firing of three professors effective at the close of the current school year.

Thomas Rose, a sociology instructor, was the only one of the three professors in question to attend the meeting, which included Hood President Dr. Randle Elliott and Dean Catherine Chilman, as well as over 100 students and faculty members. Charles Forsythe, and Art History instructor, and Earl Bragdon, a History instructor, are the two who did not attend.

During the course of the discussion, the official administration position that the three were to be released for financial reasons gave way in part to more personal causes.

"I have grave questions as to the maturity of Tom Rose as a professional person," said Dean Chilman when pressed by students. Originally the dean had stated that "I can not be completely honest with you because, when administrative decisions are made, it is not the best thing to tell about the personal reasons involved," she said.

Dr. Elliott had opened the meeting by saying that the three dismissals were the result of a "severe financial crisis." Last year the college encountered a deficit of $131,000 and this year the projected deficit is $265,000.

"We must do what we can to bring expenses into line with revenue," Elliott said.

A majority of students attending the meeting, who appeared opposed to the decision to fire the professors, sought further cause for the move. Rose himself dismissed the financial reason as "skirting the issue."

"Why are you getting rid of me and talking about getting new professors," Rose said. "What are the real reasons for getting rid of me?"

Dean Chilman then indicated that Rose's professional maturity was in question. She cited as an example that Rose had read a letter from Dr. Elliott to one of his classes, which she called "seriously unprofessional." Rose in turn labeled her examples "petty."

The Dean refused to comment on the reasons that the other two professors were dismissed.

"There are reasons for the other two that we will never say but you will have to believe that there are reasons," she said.

An outgrowth of the specific discussion concerning the three professors was the question of student participation in the decision - making process at Hood. Some of the students at the meeting felt that they should have a voice in such decisions as the firing of professors. Hood administrators disagree.

"Stidents have a role in an advisory capacity, not as administrators or policy - makers," Dean Chilman said. "You can't run anything if you have groups not totally prepared to be administrators."

A number of students took ex-

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ception to this belief and voiced their dissatisfaction.

"The major issue is that Hood is a closed-in hole in the ground," one student said. "They treat us like five - year - old kids and don't feel we can understand a decision."

Another stated that "We have student organizations that really do absolutely nothing. We want to be involved but that's not happening," she said.

Dr. Elliott agreed that there is a need for a faculty evaluation process to include students but said that it hasn't yet been done. "You can mark it down as one of my failures," he said.

Dr. Elliott closed the meeting at the recommendation of a student by saying that "Good people have come and gone – you have an excellent faculty and will have next year." He added that "as of now, the case is closed."

Elliott later said that he did not feel that the students were satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. "They're not satisfied unless they get what they want," he said. "But sound administration must be made on what's right for future generations, not only the one here now."

"I think the meeting went around in circles," Rose said afterward. "It was interesting that instead of facing the real issues, they emphasized petty things."

"I have a great deal of hope for this college despite what went on tonight," Rose added. "I don't think it's a closed issue."